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THE FUNDAMENTAL CAUSES OF THE PRESENT SITUATION IN MEXICO

*By Nevin O. Winter, Author of "Mexico and Her People of
To-day"*

The life insurance company, before passing upon an application for insurance, requires the applicant to give not only the facts concerning himself, but also certain information regarding his progenitors. If it is necessary to look to the ancestors of the individual, in order to be able to judge him and his possible ills correctly, how much more important it is when attempting to treat of the conditions existing in a nation to go back and see from whom the nation have descended, what traditions may have been inherited, and what environment has surrounded it.

In an attempt to analyze the troubles of Mexico, it is not enough to say that the land question, or labor for debt, or even social evolution is at the bottom of it all. Some great injustice or inequality might explain the spontaneous uprising of a people in revolution, but it does not satisfactorily account for a series of detached revolutions under leaders who would be just as ready to fight each other as the central government against which the efforts of each and all are aimed. There are other underlying causes which must not be overlooked, for they help to elucidate a situation that is almost inexplicable to the average North American.

The apparently dormant condition of some of the countries to the south of us in the New World for so long a period, was undoubtedly due to the different conditions under which they were colonized. Unlike the Cavaliers who settled in Virginia and sought political freedom, the Puritans who took possession of the New England coast for both political and religious freedom, and the broad-minded, tolerant Roman Catholics who settled in Maryland under the concession granted to Lord Baltimore, the early colonists

of South and Central America sought those shores to secure wealth and the means of an easy existence. They brought with them the spirit of the Middle Ages; instead of seeking religious freedom, they transferred the narrowness of creed that characterized Spain in the time of Ferdinand and Isabella to the New World. The natives were enslaved, as the Conquistadores did not look upon labor with favor. Looking upon the natives as an inferior race, it soon became unpopular among the Spaniards to perform any labor which might be considered menial. The Inquisition was established with all its bigotry and disregard of the God-given human rights.

With the union of the crowns of Castile and Aragon, by the marriage of Ferdinand and Isabella, and by the overwhelming defeat of the dark-complexioned Moors, Spain had become a nation filled with soldiers and adventurers. The long wars with the alien invaders had bred a race inured to and in love with the profession of arms. With the discovery of the New World Spain had suddenly leaped to the front and had become for a time, at least, the greatest nation of the day. Ships were constructed in great numbers and sent out filled with voyagers "toward that part of the horizon where the sun set." In the sixteenth century Spain had practically become the mistress of the seas and the most powerful nation in the world. Her soldiers were brave and the acknowledged leaders of chivalry. One is lost in admiration of the undaunted courage of such men as Cortez and Pizarro, and of the lesser-known heroes Pedro de Alvarado, who made a successful expedition against the powerful Quiché tribes in Guatemala, and Pedro de Valdivia, who resolutely marched across the great nitrate deserts of Tarapacá and Atacama, and added Chile to the Spanish crown.

When Cortez and his band of adventurers came to the court of Montezuma, and saw the lavish display of vessels and ornaments made of the precious metal, they thought that they had discovered the land of gold for which they were searching. Attracted by the glowing reports of untold wealth, thousands of Spaniards soon followed the first

band of Conquistadores, and they rapidly spread over the entire country occupied by the Aztecs, ever searching for the mines from whence this golden harvest came. A little later Pizarro made his wonderful find of the Inca civilization in Peru, and his reports were confirmatory of the almost unbelievable wealth told by Cortez and his followers of the wonders of the New World. Then the leaders began their policy of imprisoning and torturing the Aztec and Inca chieftains to force them to give up the hiding places of their treasures. New bands of adventurers were attracted to the New World, and ship after ship set sail toward the setting sun loaded with adventurers and their followers, and ever ringing in the ears of all was the refrain:

Gold! Gold! Gold! Gold!
Bright and yellow, hard and cold.

Shortly after the Conquest all the desirable lands were parcelled out among the invaders, and the few Indian caciques who had helped, with their powerful influence, in their subjugation. The Spaniards rapidly pacified the country, for the Aztec masses, however warlike they may have been before the coming of the Spaniards, were subdued by one blow. There were soon convinced that opposition to the power of Spain was useless. The priests, also, through their quickly acquired influence, taught submission to those whom God, in His infinite wisdom, had placed over them. Chiefs who would not yield otherwise were bribed to use their power over their vassals in favor of the Spaniards. Thus by force, bribery, intrigue, diplomacy, treachery and even religion, the Indians were reconciled and the spirit of opposition to the Spaniards broken. The result was a new and upstart nobility who ruled the country with an iron hand in the course of a few decades; and the natives, with the exception of the chiefs, were made vassals of these newly-made nobles.

The Church is a delicate subject upon which to touch, but the ecclesiastical authorities worked hand in hand with the civil authorities. Pope Alexander VI issued the following bull:

We give, concede, and assign them (lands in the New World) in perpetuity to you and the Kings of Castile and of Leon, your heirs and successors; and we make, constitute and depute you and your heirs and successors, the aforesaid, lords of these lands, with free, full and absolute power, authority and jurisdiction.

This absolute power and union of the church with civil authorities worked great harm in the colonies, and Mexico had more than her full share. It is simply another illustration of the fact that special privileges are difficult to eradicate when established by long usage, and those enjoying them yield only to force. The Church, which had imposed on the people such a vast number of priests, friars and nuns, and had acquired most of the wealth of the country, clung with the grip of death to its privileges and property. Brazil is the only country of South America where the two forces have been separated, and Mexico is the most conspicuous of the North American Latin republics.

If we, as citizens of the United States, in reading our early colonial history, think that our forefathers had reason to feel aggrieved against the mother country, and if we believe that the events of the Boston Tea Party and other disturbances which antedated the Revolutionary War were justified, how much more reason the colonists of the Spanish American colonies had to be indignant toward their mother country. Our forefathers had not one-tenth of the grievances to complain of that could be found in the treatment of Mexico, Peru, Chile and the other Spanish provinces because of their misrule by Spain. The entire colonial system of Spain in South and Central America was one of selfishness, cruelty and tyranny.

The policy actuating Spain and dictating her treatment of her New World provinces was well expressed by one of the Mexican viceroys as follows:

Let the people of these dominions learn once for all that they were born to be silent and to obey, and not to discuss or to have opinions in political affairs.

As a consequence of its narrow and almost inhuman policy, local human rights were not recognized by the

government of Spain. It was treason for a man to assert his freedom, or to seek a free field for his labor. He could not enter into business without the consent of an official. The natives were compelled to labor for the conquerors without profit. Imposing buildings were constructed, cities were encircled with massive walls, great monasteries, churches and convents rose on the hills, all by the unrequited toil of generations of these impressed natives. Education was denied, and the local governors, including in many instances the ecclesiastical officials, united in this system of repression and disregard of human rights.

Trade with foreign countries was wholly prohibited, and all mineral wealth was heavily taxed. The sole purpose of the colonial policy of Spain in the matter of trade seemed to be to protect the trading monopoly, which had been farmed out to the merchants of Cadiz, and to keep a record of the production of silver and gold in order to insure the collection of the royal one-fifth. This policy is shown in its greatest absurdity in the treatment of Argentina. Every Atlantic port of South America was closed to traffic except Nombre de Dios on the coast of Panama. Everything destined for that continent, even for the mouth of the Rio de la Plata, had to be landed there, transported across the Isthmus, reloaded to vessels on the Pacific bound for Callao, and from there again transported overland across the mighty heights of the Andes. The governors of Buenos Aires were instructed to forbid all importation and exportation from that port under penalty of death and forfeiture of property to those engaged in it.

Spain continued to send all of her viceroys, captains-general, archbishops, etc., from the mother country. Of the one hundred and seventy viceroys who ruled in the Americas, only four were of American birth, and those were reared, as well as educated, in Spain. The same would hold true of the archbishops, captains-general, and other chief officials. Some of these officials were good, but most of them were either bad or indifferent. Of the governors of Argentina, all were Spaniards with one exception—Saavedra—and this man is one of the brightest names dur-

ing the seventeenth century. He retained the confidence of both natives and Spaniards by his reputation for giving a square deal to all sides.

It is not to be wondered at, and in fact no other result could be expected by the intelligent and unprejudiced student of history, than that three centuries of such rule should have an important effect upon the character of the colonies over which it was exercised. It has long been a disputed question, and a favorite subject for debate in literary societies, as to which force, whether that of heredity or environment, exercises the greatest influence in the development of character; but the partisans of each side recognize and will readily admit that both heredity and environment are dominant forces in the development of the character of the individual and the nation as well. Therefore we can not do otherwise in trying to decide the underlying causes of the unrest existing in Mexico, and which at times breaks forth in some of the other republics to the south of us, than consider this element and placing upon it considerable stress. Someone may say that a hundred years has passed since the Spanish rule was practically broken in the New World, but a hundred years is too short a time in the life of a nation to overcome fully the evil effects of such an environment superimposed upon the hereditary feature that has already been mentioned.

Hence it is that in studying the history of Mexico and the other Latin-American republics, that although we find Mexico's Hidalgo, Venezuela's Bolivar, Argentina's San Martin, and other patriots whom we may well place by the side of our beloved Washington, at the same time we find Santa Ana of Mexico, Carrera of Guatemala, Rosas of Argentina, Lopez of Paraguay, and many others who might be mentioned, for whom we can find no counterpart in the history of the United States, unless someone might suggest the name of Aaron Burr. Burr was undoubtedly willing to plunge his native land into war to further his selfish ambitions, but he could not find enough followers. These men had inherited to the full the mediaeval idea of feudalism that might always makes right, that and one is justified

in pushing his power to the uttermost by the force of arms in gaining his own selfish ends. These men had no more regard for the rights of the individual, or for the inherent claims of human liberty, than had Spain or the viceroys whom she sent to govern the colonies in the New World. We can appreciate the sentiment that led to the self abnegation of San Martin, who sacrificed home, friends and honors after assisting in the establishment of three republics, and even submitted to cruel charges of ingratitude and cowardice rather than take part in the divisions of the factions fighting among themselves for place in his beloved fatherland. Few finer examples of unselfishness are recorded in the world's history. We can realize the truth contained in the political document left by General Bolivar, which concludes with these words: "I have ploughed in the seas."

In only a few of the republics of the New World to the south of us has there been any great amount of new blood introduced by way of immigration. Spain forbade immigrants to come into her colonies, and the natural resources of most of the others have not attracted those seeking new homes in any great numbers since the ban was removed. The exceptions to this general statement are Argentina and Brazil. To both of those republics thousands upon thousands of immigrants have come each year for a considerable period, and the good results of this influx are shown in the increased steadiness of the republican form of government.

These immigrants have been mostly Italians and Spaniards, although in Brazil a very large colony of Germans have made their home. But the Spaniards who have come in this recent immigration are different from those early adventurers who first sought these shores. They are men who do not seek gold or any easy road to wealth; they are not men who toil not, neither do they spin, but they come to their new homes with the purpose and expectation of earning their bread by the actual sweat of their brow, and asking only that a fair remuneration be given them in return for this expenditure of energy. They are the same type of people as the Germans and the English and the

Irish who sought new homes within the borders of the United States, and who have formed the real backbone of the Republic, as it exists today.

Since the establishment of the republic in Brazil in 1889 by a bloodless revolution, there has been a continuous succession of constitutional occupants of the presidential chair down to the present time. The same statement might be made for Argentina, covering a period since the election of that noble man, President Bartolomé Mitre, in 1862. Among his successors have been some most excellent statesmen, such as Sarmiento, and to offset the good report there has only been the one unfortunate case of the grasping Celman. In my opinion these countries have one advantage over our own in that a president is forbidden by the constitution to succeed himself, and therefore is not under the temptation to use his first term of office to build up a machine or organization in order to secure for himself a second term. In both Argentina and Brazil this requirement is faithfully respected, and President Roca of Argentina is the only man who was called for the second time to the high office of president, and in this instance two terms of six years each intervened between the first and second terms of President Roca.

Let us take a look for a moment at the early history of the Republic of Mexico, and see how the principles herein enunciated have worked out. The beginning of the nineteenth century opened with a feeling of unrest in all European nations and their colonies. When Napoleon began to overturn monarchies with a ruthless hand, the idea of the divine right of kings received a shock. Among the countries thus affected was Spain, which had fallen from the high pedestal it had formerly occupied. The success of the English colonists in overthrowing the foreign yoke no doubt acted as a leaven in spreading dissatisfaction throughout the Spanish colonies, but an influence of even greater moment was the placing upon the throne of Spain of Joseph Napoleon by his brother, the Emperor. Hitherto a sort of religious reverence had been felt toward the Spanish ruler, but no such sentiment was held toward the Napoleons.

The spirit of revolution and liberty was in the air, and restraint became more and more galling upon the colonists in Mexico.

It was on the morning of the 16th of September, 1810, that a struggle for independence was inaugurated by Miguel Hidalgo in the little village of Dolores, which lasted for eleven years, and during which much of the soil of Mexico was crimsoned with the blood of those slain in battle or executed by the authorities as traitors. At the outset the people were much less prepared for a contest at arms than were the American revolutionists, most of whom had been accustomed to firearms in their effort to conquer the wilderness. The Mexicans knew nothing of weapons or military tactics, and their early leaders were even without military training. Hidalgo and Morelas were priests of the established church. The followers of Hidalgo were made up of a motley crowd armed with stones, lances, *machetes*, arrows, clubs and swords. But enthusiasm made up for the lack of weapons and military training, so that terror struck the hearts of the Spaniards, and every town for a time yielded to this new leader.

Spanish rule formally ended in Mexico in 1821, but peace did not follow at once as it did in the United States, for in the fifty years succeeding the securing of independence, the form of government changed ten times, and there were fifty-four different rulers, including two emperors and a number of dictators. There were five different presidents in each of the years 1846 and 1847, and there were four in the year 1855. These facts are not an evidence of tranquillity, to say the least. The "progresistas" and "retrogrados," or, as we would say in English, the conservatives and the liberals, were constantly at war with each other. Frequently it was the contest between the clericals and anti-clericals, a struggle over the sequestration of church property. The anti-clericals were probably just as good Christians as the others, but they thought that the church had too much wealth. I would not be surprised if some of the same influences were at work in the present situation. From the end of the administration of the first president,

Guadalupe Victoria, which ended in 1828, until after the death of Maximilian, in 1867, there was not a year of peace in Mexico. Revolutions, *promunciamientos*, "plans" and restorations followed each other in quick succession. "Plans" of one faction were bombarded by "pronunciamientos" by its opponents. Generals, presidents and dictators sprang up like mushrooms and their career was as evanescent. Revolutions were an every day affair. A man in position of authority did not know when his time to be shot might come. A sudden turn of fortune might send him either to the National Palace or before a squad of men with guns aimed at his heart. An illustration of the latter statement is shown in the treatment of that grim old patriot, Guerrero. By a turn of fortune he became the third president in 1829; only a few months later he was compelled to flee and, after a farcical trial, was condemned to death as "morally incapable" and was shot on the 15th of February, 1831.

Elections eventually became a farce. The unfortunate habit was required of appealing to arms instead of submitting to the result of the ballot. The trouble was that the people had copied the letter and not the spirit of the American Constitution. It is an exemplification of the fact that self-government can not be thrust upon nations from without. It must be developed from within. A constitution with high sounding words means little to a people unless to the distinguishing characteristics of self-reliance and self-confidence are also added that important quality of self-control.

Had it not been for the elements of heredity and environment, of which I have already made mention, such conditions as these just related would not have been possible; a Santa Ana could never have been evolved. Many of the so-called revolutionary leaders were little more than freebooters. They may have secured their followers through high-sounding speeches, which were punctuated with choice rhetoric and seductive promises, but the fact remains that they deserve no more respect than the highway robber who would rob you of your all. They would violate a church with as little compunction of conscience as an avowed enemy. Had conditions been different, it would not have been possi-

ble for a foreign government to send a Maximilian and set him up on the throne. Had there been self-abnegation and self-control, which are so necessary in a republican form of government, the leaders would have swallowed their petty jealousies and united against the invasion of their soil by foreign troupes, who came to support an alien emperor upon a throne in a country which for almost half a century had held itself out to the world as a republic.

The United States has something to be ashamed of during this period, for the Mexican War is not a subject upon which we can pride ourselves. Mr. Bancroft, the historian, does not mince words in his treatment of the subject, for he says:

It [the Mexican War] was a premeditated and predetermined affair; it was the result of a deliberately calculated scheme of robbery on the part of the superior force.

The result was a foregone conclusion, for Mexico, torn by internal dissensions, impoverished by the expense of revolutions, and official robberies, and with a government changing with every change of the seasons, had neither arms, money nor supplies for such a conflict. And yet this war might have been avoided by Mexico, had there been a government in power long enough to negotiate a treaty. A special envoy sent from Washington at the request of one president was refused an audience by a new one who had usurped the office before the envoy arrived. The brightest light that shines throughout this period is that of the grim old warrior, Juarez, who was the Lincoln of Mexico. This man had even greater trials than our martyred president, at least, they continued much longer, but he kept a true heart and retained his courage throughout all the trials and tribulations of many years of public life. He prepared the way for the man who did bring about both external and internal peace and material prosperity for almost a generation.

Opinions differ very much as to the merits of the long rule of Porfirio Diaz, and I say rule advisedly. It is not to be wondered at that the man who governs with a strong arm will make bitter enemies as well as warm partisans. Likewise such a policy will always have its defamers, as well as

its supporters. The judgment of the world is still divided about Napoleon, and whether his high-handed methods wrought more of good than of evil. Hence it is that some can see nothing in Diaz but a tyrant, an enslaver of his people, and a man unfit for even life himself. They forget that neither peonage nor the land monopoly was originated by Diaz, but that both were inherited from the Spaniards and supported by the voters of the country. They do not look into the conditions faced by Diaz when he first became president, nor the bloody history of the republic before that time.

Those were indeed troublous times in Mexico while we were celebrating the centennial of our independence in 1876. The strong spirit of Juarez had been broken by the long strain from 1857 to 1872, during which time he was nominally president. His successor, Lerda, was a weak, ambitious man who accomplished little. There was disorder, everywhere; the country was overrun with bandits, and a worse than empty treasury were the conditions when Diaz grasped the reins. A huge foreign debt that had on several occasions brought about foreign intervention was also one of the conditions. There were only three hundred and fifty miles of railroad in the entire country. This was the condition of affairs in Mexico when Porfirio Diaz made his memorable march into the City of Mexico at the head of an army of several thousand armed men on the 24th of November, 1876.

Judging this man at a distance, we, who live in a country where even a third term is a "bogie," are inclined to dismiss the subject of Diaz with the charge of "dictator" and "republican despot" with all the odium that these terms imply. President Diaz was undoubtedly both a dictator and a despot. He had gone into office with the slogan of one term, and he respected this principle of his platform by retiring at the end of his first term of four years and gracefully yielding the office to his successor, Gonzales. This was the first time in Mexican history where the spectacle was seen of one president voluntarily relinquishing the scepter to his successor and returning to private life without an effort to retain himself in power. Gonzales entered the office

one of the most popular men of Mexico, having been elected by an almost unanimous vote. Four years later he left it under a cloud of almost universal execration and contempt. Then it was that Diaz was reëlected. Then it was that he undoubtedly changed his views, and had the law of succession changed so that he could succeed himself in a constitutional manner. He occupied that high office thirty-one years, lacking a few months, or almost a generation.

My personal opinion is that the motives actuating President Diaz were of the highest type of patriotism; he, more than ourselves, knew the needs of this people and what was best for them. In suppressing brigandage and restoring internal peace, even though he retained his position by arbitrary methods, he gave the people a needed opportunity to develop the resources of the country, to increase the education among the masses, and to devote themselves to those peaceful pursuits which are so necessary to develop the national character essential in a republican form of government. It is quite likely that in his later years, through the natural weakening of bodily and mental powers, although he was a remarkably preserved man for his age, that he may have come under the influence of unfortunate advisers, who were farming out the resources of the country for their own individual benefit. If this is so, it is an unfortunate fact and bitterly has he paid for it. Whether his retention of the office for so long a period was a really good or bad thing for the country the historian of the future will be a better judge, for we are too close to the events of his time to weigh them correctly and impassionately.

When I first visited Mexico, Diaz was at the height of his power. Railroad development was going ahead rapidly; the telegraph and the telephone were spreading over the country; new mines were being opened up, and the old ones were being worked industriously; plantations were being developed by outside capital in the tropical regions, and every indication seemed to augur well. Although I was familiar with the turmoil that had preceded this administration, it seemed to me that so many years had passed by in comparative peace and quiet, a new generation had grown up

into manhood who were not familiar with the revolutionary disturbances of the previous years, and who could not do otherwise than see the good effects of peace, that all possibility of a recurrence of such conditions had passed away. It did not seem possible that the country could again be torn by internal dissensions, with revolutionary leaders inciting the people to arms all over the republic.

The culmination of Mexico's greatness seemed to have been reached on the 15th of September, 1910, during the centennial celebration to which most foreign countries had sent special representatives. On the night of that date, President Diaz appeared on the balcony in front of the National Palace where the old bell with which Hidalgo first sounded the call to liberty is preserved. The President waved a flag, rang the bell, and shouted "Viva Mexico!" The cry of "Viva Mexico" was taken up by the crowd nearest to the President, and then by those farther away, until the great shout might have been heard all over the capital. The bells of the grand old cathedral pealed forth their loudest tones, the factory whistles shrieked, skyrockets were sent up in the air, and every noise-making device was turned loose. In the light of later events, this wonderful celebration seems to have been a sham, or at least only on the surface. At that time a political volcano was simmering all over the republic, and was just ready to break forth into violent eruption. Less than two months from that time the first outbreak against the civil authorities occurred. A new leader came to the front with "no reëlection" and "effective suffrage" as the two catch words. It was practically the same battle cry as that of Diaz in his original campaign.

No sooner was Madero installed in the high office to which he was elevated, than the very forces which he had himself brought into existence were arrayed against him. Extravagant promises, such as free land, lower taxes, higher wages and a decreased cost of living, had been made. It was the old story of revolutions in Mexico, and some of the other Latin American countries, for the revolution had bred a race of *caudillos* for whom the victorious party had to pro-

vide, and who rated their own deserts high. The atavic appetite for a life of adventure had again been whetted. It was an absolute impossibility for Madero, however well meaning and conscientious he may have been, to immediately carry into effect the reforms promised by him, and to provide offices for these followers which would be satisfactory to themselves. It would have required years to work out such a program. But the *caudillos* could not wait. The spirit of impatience overcame all self-restraint, all patriotic impulse. It would be a misuse of and slander upon the term patriot to call all of these revolutionary leaders, who have sprung up in nearly every section of Mexico, by the name of patriot. Some of them are little better than freebooters, who prefer a life of adventure and notoriety to peaceful avocations. Some of them may be honest in their views, but sadly mistaken. I would not attempt to classify the revolutionary leaders and say which of them belong to the first class, which to the second class, or which of them may be real patriots, but I feel safe in saying that more of them belong to the first class than either of the others. They are not willing to curb their personal ambitions and lust for power for the general good of the country.

From this paper, it will appear that, in my opinion, the troubles in Mexico are of long standing. Nearly everything complained of by the Mexicans themselves, and that are criticised by people of other nations, can be traced either to the effect of heredity or environment. The land question, of which complaint is made so frequently, was inherited. The greater part of Mexico was parceled out by Cortez to his followers, and that which was not given by him was donated by the Spanish Crown to favorites. Many of the descendants of those original settlers still occupy these lands. The estate of General Terrazas in Chihuahua would make a commonwealth as large as the states of Massachusetts and Rhode Island combined, with a small farm of a million acres besides. The Zuloaga family own a *hacienda* which is thirty-five miles wide, nearly a hundred miles long, and includes about two million acres. On these great *haciendas* the proprietors still live a patriarchal existence

with thousands of peons attached to the estates. One *hacienda* controls twenty thousand peons, an army in themselves.

The owners of these great estates, like all owners of special privileges, cling to their inheritance with the grip of death, and they will do anything rather than yield one jot or one tittle of the prerogatives which have been in their families for generations. Some seven thousand families, out of a population of fifteen million, own the entire landed surface of Mexico, according to the best reports that I am able to find. This shows that it has never been a land of homesteaders, such as we have in the United States, for had the land been parceled out as it has been with us, with tens of thousands of families who have an actual interest in the soil, the political conditions in Mexico would never have reached or remained in the state that they have.

Mexico has never had the advantage of foreign immigration, and there are very few non-Spanish speaking whites in Mexico, with the exception of English, Americans, and Germans, who have gone there not for the purpose of making homes for themselves and their families, but for the purpose of exploiting some one or another of the natural resources of the country, and doing it frequently at the expense of the Mexicans themselves. This condition can be blamed upon Spain, for she forbade people of other nations to come to the country. The official corruption which has been criticised a great deal, and for which there is undoubtedly considerable reason, was the result of Spanish misrule, for it was the Spanish overlords who introduced and developed this system of government. When you know that there are districts in Spain today where scarcely 10 per cent of the inhabitants have mastered the art of reading and writing, it is not surprising to learn that after three centuries of the rule of Spanish governors and viceroys, 95 per cent of the people in Mexico still remained in profound ignorance. Learning for the masses was regarded as prejudicial by those representatives and misrepresentatives of the home government. Although conditions are not ideal yet, the percentage of ignorance has been greatly reduced.

Mexico likewise had the good fortune, as well as misfor-

tune, to have a large indigenous population. This native population furnished the labor necessary to develop the country which the Conquistadores were unwilling to do themselves. They were reduced to a condition of practical slavery. When slavery was abolished, peonage was established. The nature of these peons, who constitute almost 80 per cent of the entire population of Mexico, is such that they have formed a compact and inert mass. They have been non-resisting as a rule, and are content when their simple bodily wants are supplied. It has been an easier matter for the *hacendados* to get up a body of followers who would fight for them from the ranks of their peons. The peon is one of the greatest problems of Mexico, and it will take a long time to develop the best that is in him.

For the future of Mexico, I have great hopes. Conditions are better today than they were a half century ago. Just when the turn of the balance will come, I would not venture to predict, but I do feel safe in saying that it will come eventually. The inherited misfortunes of the Mexico of today will sooner or later pass away. Europe at one time went through similar conditions. Out of the troublous times of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, nations emerged which had been strengthened by the lessons of adversity learned in the internecine struggles of that period. This is probably the final transition—the dawn of a new era. The paroxysms now shaking the country in rebellions and treacheries, which have so shocked the world, mean the recovery of Mexico ultimately to peace and prosperity. Unrest and change are conditions in every country today, and with both sexes. These conditions have but added to those elements of unrest peculiar to our neighbor across the Rio Grande. A strong man must arise, perhaps another Diaz, at least a leader of enough force of character to draw the people to him and awe any opposing chieftains who may wish to create trouble for his own personal aggrandisement. Intervention should not even be thought of by the United States. From a standpoint of dollars and cents it would be cheaper for Uncle Sam to reimburse all losses sustained

by Americans and American interests than to incur the expense that intervention would involve.

I like the Mexican people, and I am a great admirer of the Spanish-American and Portuguese-American races. They are not inferior to the Anglo-American. They have many inherent good qualities; they possess some splendid traits of character, which are difficult to find in the North Americans. Instead of brusqueness they have courtesy; in financial honor they are the equal of our own people. They are perhaps bound more to the influence of tradition than we are, and this has been, I believe, one of their misfortunes. Were they less influenced by tradition, these inherited traits which I have mentioned in this paper, which are not found in nearly all, or not even in a majority of the Mexicans, but which are found in enough to cause the troubles that we find in making a historical study of the country, would have disappeared ere this.

I have great faith even in the peon who constitutes such an important element in Mexico. Some people think of the peon of Mexico, the coolie of China, and the peasant of Russia as inferior beings, but I do not believe that there is such a thing as inferior humanity. There is, however, a great deal of undeveloped humanity, and it is in this class that we must place the Mexican peon. He is almost wholly an undeveloped creature. There are a few isolated examples which show that he is on a par with others of a fairer skin. Juarez was a full blooded Mexican Indio, and he is one of the greatest men that Mexico has produced. Diaz himself had one-eighth of the peon blood in his veins. Many other examples might be given. I only hope that the time will come, and come soon, when turmoil and revolution will cease, and Mexico will take her place by the side of the great nations not only of the New World, but the Old World as well.